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16th meeting

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New York

Chairman: U Mya Than ..... (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 *(continued)*

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: Before we proceed with our work, I should like, on behalf of the Committee, to welcome the group of disarmament fellows who are with us today. For the past 21 years, the disarmament fellowship programme has trained several hundred young diplomats, who have made significant contributions to the global efforts in the cause of disarmament and international peace and security. Some of them have become high-ranking representatives of their respective countries, including some who are present among us during this session of the First Committee.

Mr. Seibert (Germany): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/55/L.15 on item 73 (j) of the General Assembly agenda, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures".

So far, the draft resolution is sponsored by 84 Member States, which are listed at the top of the document. In addition to these countries, the following delegations have also co-sponsored the draft resolution: Cambodia and the Republic of Korea.

As we do every year, we attach particular importance to the fact that the sponsorship bridges the usual regional group lines and involves Member States from virtually all regions of the globe. I should like to express my appreciation and thanks to all of the sponsors.

Practical disarmament measures remain an important item on the United Nations agenda. The past 12 months have been particularly encouraging for this German initiative. In particular, Security Council meetings were devoted to conflict prevention in November 1999 and July 2000 and to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in March 2000. Other forums and United Nations institutions — including the Special Committee on Peacekeeping, the Disarmament Commission and the United Nations Development Programme — the Secretary-General in his millennium report and even the Brahimi report have addressed questions of post-conflict peace-building and peace consolidation with a view to helping build an environment of durable peace.

The group of interested States has met regularly and has become — in close cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs — a focal point where delegations can meet to exchange information about their various activities in the field of practical disarmament for the benefit of the others and for the sake of better coordination altogether. In chairing the group, Germany has tried to show that practical disarmament is a very real issue and has a direct impact on the lives of people in countries affected by conflicts. So far, the group has met 12 times and has promoted a

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variety of projects in Cameroon, Guatemala, Albania and Niger. In addition, a reference paper on the activities of the group has just been published and, of course, new projects will be launched.

The text of this year's draft resolution follows by and large the wording of previous years. Let me therefore highlight only the changes to last year's text.

In the first preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 5, last year's wording is updated. Operative paragraph 1 stresses the relevance of last year's "Guidelines" adopted by the Disarmament Commission, which were directly related to practical disarmament. Finally, the sixth preambular paragraph takes into account this year's deliberations of Working Group II of the Disarmament Commission on practical confidence-building measures. After consultations with interested delegations, we have altered the previous language of this paragraph, taking into account the reservations of some delegations concerning the original language. The text as it stands now should thus be acceptable to all delegations.

With these explanatory remarks, I put this draft resolution before the Committee. Consultations with the sponsors and with other delegations were conducted prior to the submission of the draft in an effort to again secure consensus on it. In keeping with this tradition, I trust that the draft will again be adopted without a vote. We invite all delegations to join in a consensus on this draft resolution.

May I also briefly mention the other German draft resolution on transparency in military expenditures, which was introduced last year on a biannual basis jointly with Romania. This means that we will put the draft resolution forward again next year at the fifty-sixth session of the First Committee.

Mr. Čalovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/55/L.47, entitled "Maintenance of international security-good-neighbourliness, stability and development of South-Eastern Europe", which is sponsored by the following delegations: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

This is an omnibus draft resolution on agenda items 66, "Development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States", and 67, "Maintenance of international security", including its sub-items (a) on the prevention of the violent disintegration of States and (b) on the stability and development of South-Eastern Europe.

The region of south-eastern Europe is leaving its difficult period of conflict, insecurity and underdevelopment. It is entering a new period of integration with developed Europe. At present, our main preoccupation is the acceleration of this process. Our wish and aim is that integration with developed Europe should take place sooner rather than later. That, of course, depends on all parties involved, particularly on the parties seeking integration. So, its main message is to speedily overcome the difficulties in southeast Europe and the speedy integration of the region into the European structures, into the European Union in particular.

At present, the optimism that this goal can be achieved is high indeed. I believe that the preoccupations of the authors and of the co-sponsors of this resolution are well spelled out, both in the preambular and operational paragraphs of draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.47. Therefore, it is not necessary for me to read them or paraphrase them to the Committee. But, if some clarifications are needed, we will gladly provide them.

Furthermore, I would like to mention some points relevant to this Committee's main preoccupation, the disarmament and arms control matters. In our region, as a result of known difficulties and four wars, there is a lot of conventional armament, a lot of arms and light weapons and a lot of mines to be de-mined. A lot of arms are illegally possessed, and there is a lot of illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons. The present arm forces are disproportionately high for a period of peaceful development and integration with developed Europe. Therefore, the main aim of this resolution is to support the policies and measures aimed at eliminating various illegalities and helping to build a better overall situation.

At present, the security situation in the region is, of course, not without difficulties. It can be changed

for the better through undertaking and pursuing various confidence-building measures. One of the main instruments in that direction is the implementation of the Pact of Stability for South Eastern Europe. The goal of this resolution is to support the efforts in that direction. We would like the resolution to be adopted without vote.

Before I conclude, I would like to make a technical amendment on preambular paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.47. Instead of "recalling", this word should replaced by "noting also". This is because the outcome of this conference has not been mentioned yet, so we are noting it for the first time.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): My delegation wishes to take the floor on the issue of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. This is an issue to which my country attaches high priority.

Abundant, cheap and easy to use, small arms have been used to injure and kill many thousands of people, the majority of whom are women and children. It saddens us to learn that many victims of the indiscriminate use of small arms and light weapons are the non-combatants. Shockingly, the use of such weapons has resulted in more deaths than the devastating two world wars. The massive circulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons, which exacerbates ongoing conflicts, has become a serious international security threat. The existence of a close nexus between small arms and conflicts was rightly highlighted by the United Nations Secretary-General when he remarked that the proliferation of small arms will be one of the key challenges in preventing conflicts in the new century.

We appreciate the role played by the United Nations in the field of curbing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The comprehensive report as contained in document A/54/258, prepared by the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, is a landmark achievement containing useful recommendations which merit due consideration from the international community.

We share the opinion that the question of small arms and light weapons is a disarmament issue to be taken up by this Committee. As there is no existing international legal regime to outlaw small arms and light weapons, we consider the current Vienna negotiations on a convention against transnational organized crime and a protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition and other related materials as very constructive steps in the right direction. Successful conclusion of these negotiations will fulfil the long-felt need of formulating a legally binding instrument critical to eradicating the illicit manufacturing, transfer, transport, storage and deployment of such weapons.

At the regional level too, some important initiatives have been undertaken. The Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, signed in November 1997, and the Economic Community of West African States initiative for a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons are commendable endeavours.

Some 500 million small arms and light weapons are currently in circulation in the world. During the 1990s alone, these weapons were responsible for 3 million deaths, 2 million of them children. Moreover, the scourge of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has been spreading, defying boundaries. Effective response to this menace can only be had through our collective efforts.

It is exactly with this conviction very much in mind that we are looking forward to the 2001 United Nations conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The conference should take a holistic approach to discuss all relevant issues comprehensively so that measures are agreed upon to address the problem of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Such measures must be concrete and meaningful. My delegation also believes that a culture of peace, if broadly enforced by the international community, will go a long way in substantially reducing the legal accumulation of weapons in the world. This requires confidence-building measures and prevention of conflicts through peaceful resolution of disputes.

While we remain flexible as to the dates and venue of the conference, we appreciate the generous offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the said conference in Geneva. The main consideration in this respect should be to ensure the broadest participation of Member States, including that of the least developed countries through financial assistance. The main objective of the forthcoming United Nations conference should be the mobilization of the political

will of the Member States to agree and take urgent action to tackle the problem of small arms and light weapons.

We sincerely hope that this Committee will make a right decision in resolving all procedural matters of the above conference and facilitate the work of the upcoming preparatory committee meetings.

Mr. Sood (India): I wish to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" contained in document A/C.1/55/L.30, under agenda item 74 (d) relating to review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly. The following countries have joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Fiji, Guyana, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The draft resolution is similar to last year's resolution, 54/55 D, except for some updating in the ninth preambular paragraph. Today's draft resolution goes to the very core of the nuclearized global order which persists even a decade after the cold war. Nuclear weapons continue to be viewed as a legitimate currency of power by certain States which claim the right to possess them in perpetuity.

Doctrines of first-use of nuclear weapons have been re-validated and reaffirmed, even though the threat perceptions that originally led to those doctrines have long since disappeared. There are those that reserve the right to use nuclear weapons first even against non-nuclear threats and threats from other weapons of mass destruction.

There is need to address this threat to humanity at various levels. At the level of political commitments backed by legally binding agreements, it is important for nuclear doctrines to be reoriented towards a no-first-use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States, thus beginning the process of de-legitimizing nuclear weapons globally.

The international community needs to take decisive steps in this direction as an essential element in the step-by-step process leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons. There is a clear requirement for a legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The legal underpinning of such an instrument is provided by the historic Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1996 which makes international humanitarian law applicable to the use of nuclear weapons.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.30, as in previous years, underlines that the use of nuclear weapons poses the most serious threat to the survival of mankind, refers to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1996 and expresses the conviction that a multilateral agreement prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons will strengthen international security and contribute to the climate for negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons. The draft resolution reiterates its request to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on such an international convention that would prohibit the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons. It is a matter of regret that, due to the inflexible position of certain delegations, the Conference on Disarmament has so far been unable to commence negotiations on this subject.

In commending the draft resolution to the Committee as a measure that would be of far-reaching significance, the Indian delegation along with all those delegations that have joined us in sponsoring the draft resolution, expresses the hope that it will receive the widest possible support in the Committee. At the beginning of the new millennium, a vote in favour of the draft resolution would be a vote of confidence that the international community can take decisive steps towards the goal of freeing the world of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) *(spoke in French)*: It is indeed a great pleasure for me, once again, to introduce to the draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", contained in document A/C.1/55/L.27, on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The regular submission by the group of sponsors of this draft resolution reflects the will and

determination of the States of the Mediterranean basin and of Europe to transform our region into a zone of peace, security and cooperation and therefore to give back to the Mediterranean its genuine mission of being a lake of peace.

Over the last few years, the Mediterranean countries as well as the European countries have embarked on a process of dialogue and partnership through a stepping-up of shared efforts to advance and consolidate peace and security in the region and to lay down the bases for a multi-faceted cooperation and for a partnership whose ultimate goal is prosperity and stability for all the countries of the Mediterranean region.

While the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona in 1995 laid down the foundations for new relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean, the most recent Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, held in April 1999 in Stuttgart, reaffirmed that commitment and, therefore, was a promising opportunity for engaging in an assessment of this process and providing the required political impetus to the dynamic purpose of this partnership.

I am therefore gratified to note here that significant progress has been made in all areas of cooperation since agreement has been reached to strengthen political dialogue in such areas as the struggle against terrorism, organized crime and the drug trade. So, too, agreement was reached to make economic cooperation a key element of the partnership for the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean zone of free exchange. Finally, the Stuttgart conference reaffirmed the importance of the social, cultural and human dimension for the success of the partnership and achievement of its goals.

Efforts have also been undertaken in other frameworks for concerted action and dialogue between the two shores of the Mediterranean such as the Mediterranean Forum, the Ministerial meetings of the Interior of the Western Mediterranean and others.

The draft resolution, which the co-sponsors are submitting to this body, is intended, like the draft resolution submitted last year, to be more concise and less repetitive since paragraphs 7 and 8 have been merged into a single paragraph — present paragraph 7. That merger is the result not only of the concern for brevity, but also because of the fact that these two paragraphs, 7 and 8, had the same meaning.

Except for that change, this draft resolution remains focused on the basic aspects of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean and does not differ in its basic elements from resolutions of previous sessions, particularly the most recent resolution, resolution 54/59, related to this question and adopted by the General Assembly in December 1999.

Thus, the draft resolution recalls, in its preambular part, initiatives undertaken by the countries of the region aimed at consolidating peace, security and cooperation, and insists on the duty of all States to contribute to the stability and the prosperity of the Mediterranean region, as well as their commitment to respect the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. This draft resolution also emphasizes in its preambular part the indivisibility of security in that region.

Regarding the operative part, the draft resolution reiterates the fundamental principles contained in paragraphs 1 and 2, and paragraph 4 emphasizes the need to eliminate economic and social disparities among the countries of the Mediterranean basin, the advancement of mutual respect and better understanding among cultures to strengthen peace, security and cooperation among the countries of the region.

With regard to disarmament, the draft resolution appeals to all States of the region not yet parties to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to disarmament and non-proliferation. States are also urged to promote openness and transparency.

Finally, all the States of the region are invited to cooperate in all areas to cope with terrorism, international crime and the production and illicit trade in weapons and drugs, considered to jeopardize friendly relations among States, hinder development and international cooperation and negate human rights and fundamental freedoms, resulting in the destruction of the democratic foundations of a pluralistic society.

As was the case during previous sessions, the aforementioned co-sponsors remain confident that this draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/55/L.27, inscribed within the framework of international security and regional disarmament, will continue to enjoy the support of all the members of this honourable Committee and will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): After the joint statement that was made by the permanent five, providing security assurances to Mongolia in connection with its nuclear-weapon-free status, and the statement of the Government of Mongolia on the same subject, I have been approached by some delegations. They inquired about Mongolia's precise international status, the actual content of the status, its difference from traditional nuclear-weapon-free zones and how Mongolia was contemplating to promote and strengthen it.

The Mongolian Government has already pointed out that it sees the permanent five joint statement as an important step in materializing the status and implementing the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/77 D, relating specifically to the status. As the permanent five have underlined, their statement is a political one that provides Mongolia with positive and negative security assurances and pledges the continued cooperation of the permanent five in implementing the provisions of the aforementioned resolution relating to the latter's nuclear-weapon-free status.

Mongolia considers the joint statement as a first step in implementing the resolution. Concrete subsequent follow-up measures are needed to formalize the status because the joint statement does not address any of the questions pertaining to the status. Thus, it does not address the definition of the status, without which it is impossible even to conceive the status, let alone to formalize it. Moreover, if the status is not clearly defined or accepted, it would only raise many questions. That is why it is understandable that not only the permanent five, including our two immediate neighbours, but other States or entities would not be in a position to support the substance of the status and thus to wholeheartedly commit themselves to respect it. Lack of clear definition of the status would make difficult, if not impossible, future verification of compliance with the status, and so forth.

It has been widely recognized that Mongolia's case is a unique one and thus it needs a unique approach. Since the uniqueness of the case lies in the fact that a single State is establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone, it is believed that it cannot alone draw up a constituting international treaty, as is the case with traditional zones and as is provided for in the guidelines adopted by the General Assembly last year.

At the regional international forums held in 1999 and 2000, which considered questions pertaining to Mongolia's status, many interesting and helpful ideas were put forward for consideration. It was thus believed that perhaps in Mongolia's case the adoption of national legislation would be a good way to define the status that could form the basis of the subsequent internationally recognized status. Following this creative approach, which was agreed in principle with the interested States, last February Mongolia adopted the law defining and regulating the status at the national level. The law incorporated many of the internationally accepted norms of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. It entered into force on 3 February 2000.

In the law, Mongolia has defined its nuclear-weapon-free status, prohibitions resulting from that status, the question of the transit of nuclear weapons or nuclear waste through its territory, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, national and international methods of verification of compliance with the status, liability for violation of legislation, cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other States, as well as the terms of amending and terminating the law.

In addition to the law, a special parliamentary resolution was also adopted that underlined that strengthening the status would contribute to enhancing mutual confidence in the region. The resolution mandated the Government to actively cooperate with other States, the IAEA and other relevant international organizations in implementing the provisions of the law, to take the necessary measures to ensure normal functioning of the stations that are situated on the territory of Mongolia and are designed to monitor possible nuclear weapons tests in the future and to report, as the case may be, to the Parliament of Mongolia on the implementation of the law and the resolution. Besides adopting the legislation, Mongolia is also taking measures to cooperate with its neighbours and other States in implementing, on bilateral and regional bases, other provisions of resolution 53/77 D as well. In this respect, our good relations with immediate and other neighbours is an important political asset for promoting the aims of the aforementioned resolutions and for strengthening the status.

We believe that the next logical step would be to formalize the status at the international level.

Convinced that the international community — especially the General Assembly, the Security Council and other relevant United Nations bodies — should be duly informed of the content of the legislation, the Mongolian delegation has asked the Secretary-General to circulate the text of the legislation as an official document of the United Nations. The next step could be to have the international community determine its attitude towards the status — perhaps as defined in the national legislation and based on it — to work out an appropriate arrangement to institutionalize it. Maybe another approach could also be worked out. Since this is a non-traditional case, a creative approach is needed. Perhaps the appropriate United Nations bodies, which have rich experience and expertise, could be helpful in this respect.

As to the question of promoting and enhancing the credibility of the status, it was agreed that in Mongolia's case its other external security issues should be duly addressed, as implied in resolution 53/77 D. In this regard Mongolia is open to working with all Member States, including the five nuclear-weapon States, as well as with appropriate United Nations bodies, to formalize the status at the international level and to address other external security issues. This would, in our view, promote the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation, greater predictability and stability in our part of the world.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): The proliferation and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons causes human suffering all over the world. Those weapons are not only being used in internal and intra-State conflicts, but they are also the weapons of choice of the perpetrators of violent crimes, drug smugglers and poachers long after conflicts have been resolved.

All of us who attended the launching of the United Nations documentary entitled "Armed to the Teeth" last night will agree that the death, mutilation, destruction and crime caused by the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons around the world have a direct and negative impact on socio-economic development, democratization and good governance, in particular in the developing world. Africa, for instance, is one of the continents worst affected by the scourge of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. While many African Governments are putting in place mechanisms to revitalize Africa through a commitment to stability and security on the continent, their security and stability cannot be accomplished without combating the proliferation of these weapons and their illicit trafficking and without dealing with the issue comprehensively on both the demand and supply side.

My Government remains convinced that the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects will result in the international community recognizing its obligation to deal with the issue of small arms and light weapons in a multi-faceted manner that includes security, humanitarian and developmental issues. South Africa believes that the success of the Conference will be judged by follow-up actions undertaken in the context of the decisions of the Conference, rather than the decisions themselves. The multitude of intensified national and regional initiatives to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing and excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons is evidence of the growing political will to effectively and comprehensively address this issue.

A practical way by which States could prevent the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons are the promotion of the removal of arms from society and the destruction of surplus arms. The South African Government has adopted policies that give preference to the destruction of redundant and obsolete small arms rather than selling them as an important part of its comprehensive strategy to prevent, combat and eradicate the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms. As a practical manifestation of that policy, and with the generous assistance and cooperation of the Government of Norway, South Africa was able recently to initiate the process to destroy over 250,000 redundant small arms from its military stockpile. We trust that this practical step, in addition to the joint search-and-destroy operations by the South African and Mozambican police forces — during which more than 500 tons of arms and ammunition have been destroyed — will serve as examples of practical measures that could be taken to prevent illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

It is for these reasons that South Africa initiated a draft resolution during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly entitled "Illicit trafficking in small arms". The adoption without a vote of that draft resolution by the fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions of the Assembly emphasized the need for coordinated

action based on regional, subregional and national approaches to address the problems associated with illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The consultations by the Secretary-General in response to the request made in resolution 54/54 R — and as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/55/323 — clearly underline the importance of regional, subregional and national approaches to deal with this problem.

In that regard, my delegation wishes to express our gratitude to all delegations that submitted information for inclusion in the report, and to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for compiling a comprehensive and informative report. We consider that report to be a very useful source of information in preparation for next year's Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

On behalf of 85 co-sponsors, it is again a pleasure to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons", which has been circulated in document A/C.1/55/L.38. I wish to extend our appreciation to the delegations that have already co-sponsored the draft resolution, and to invite other delegations to also do so. The large number of co-sponsors again emphasizes the strong and geographically widely based support for the objectives of the draft resolution.

In its preambular paragraphs the draft resolution incorporates relevant developments since the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The draft resolution emphasizes the importance of regional, subregional and national initiatives, and their collective impact on any international action to address illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. To that end, the draft resolution again encourages States and the Secretary-General to promote such initiatives, with a view to increase cooperation and coordination among States as well as among the relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General is requested to continue his broad-based consultations to as to provide the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects with information on the magnitude and scope of the phenomenon of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as well as information on possible measures to combat illicit trafficking in, and circulation of, small arms and the role of the United Nations therein. The results of those broad-based consultations, in addition to the information provided by the Secretary-General in his report contained in document A/55/323, will provide the necessary authoritative information to assist States in taking practical steps to address this problem.

Furthermore, the draft resolution recognizes the impact of surplus small arms and light weapons on the illicit trade in those weapons, and welcomes the practical measures undertaken by Member States to destroy surplus weapons and confiscated or collected weapons in accordance with the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on small arms.

The draft resolution continues to encourage Member States in a position to do so to take appropriate national measures to destroy surplus, confiscated or collected small arms and light weapons, and to provide on a voluntary basis information to the Secretary-General on types and quantities destroyed. A new element in this year's draft resolution is the encouragement for States to also provide information on the methods of destruction, and the request for the Secretary-General to circulate that information annually to all States.

The draft resolution continues to invite States in a position to do so to provide the necessary assistance, bilaterally, regionally and through multilateral channels, in support of the implementation of measures associated with combating illicit trafficking in and circulation of small arms.

Another, new, element in this year's draft resolution is the invitation to the Secretary-General to provide advisory and financial assistance in response to requests by States to assist them in dealing with problems associated with illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, including assistance to collect and destroy surplus, confiscated or collected small arms and light weapons.

It is the belief of the sponsors that the draft resolution, as was the case with similar texts last year and the year before, can again be adopted without a vote.

Ms. King (Australia): I am taking the floor this morning to support the draft resolution entitled "Illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons", contained in

document A/C.1/55/L.38, which was just introduced by the representative of South Africa. Australia strongly supports South Africa's initiative on this draft resolution, and has been a sponsor of similar texts from the outset.

We are all increasingly conscious of the devastating effects of the illicit trade in and excessive accumulation of small arms, and of the need for the international community to act to prevent the ongoing death and destruction that those weapons cause. Reflecting that increase in concern, the General Assembly, through previous resolutions, has taken the decision to elevate this issue to one warranting urgent international action and cooperation, in the form of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects. We believe that the international community will be able to achieve positive, practical outcomes at the 2001 Conference, and we look forward to working with all other delegations here to ensure that that is the case.

The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/55/L.38, through its request in paragraph 1, will provide valuable support to the Conference in the form of information on the magnitude and scope of the illicit trade in small arms, measures to combat the problem and the role of the United Nations in tackling this issue. The lack of information on the magnitude, scope and consequences of the illicit arms trade has been one of the major obstacles to efforts to reduce those consequences, and, in our view, the more information we have on the nature of the problem, the more likely it is we will be able to construct the right solutions. Paragraphs 2 and 3, focusing respectively on regional and on national initiatives, also contain what we believe are elements in the effort to address the small arms problem.

It is clear from the preambular part of the draft resolution that there is much work going on at the national and the regional levels, and it is our firm view that that work should be recognized and supported. The Asia-Pacific region has not been immune to the effects of the illicit arms trade; nor, however, is it ignoring the need for solutions. Australia is particularly pleased to see the advent of a number of regional programmes to promote practical solutions in areas such as demobilization, post-conflict reconstruction and the destruction and management of stockpiles. The latter is, rightly, a particular focus of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/55/L.38.

This month, the Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) will hold an experts group meeting on transnational crime, including discussion of small arms. We hope that meeting will encourage ASEAN Regional Forum members to develop regional approaches to small arms issues. Also at a meeting this month, leaders of South Pacific Forum countries will consider model legislation designed to encourage a common regional approach to weapons control. Australia has been closely involved in the development of that model legislation, which, if approved, will be a positive step forward in the region's efforts to effectively regulate weapons flows.

We firmly believe that regional programmes such as these serve as building blocks for a broader international response to the problems posed by small arms, and we therefore strongly support South Africa's efforts to ensure that the lessons learnt at that level are taken into account when we consider these issues at the international level.

I would like to conclude by expressing support for the wish of the South African delegation that the draft resolution, like similar texts in the past, be adopted this year without a vote.

Mr. Cordeiro (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): The countries members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), along with Bolivia and Chile, are well aware of the problems caused by the excessive, destabilizing build-up of small arms and light weapons all over the world. Here, we give highest priority to global, regional, subregional and even unilateral measures to combat the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in such weapons.

In the context of United Nations efforts, the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile firmly support the convening in 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects. The Conference will provide a promising opportunity to promote a comprehensive approach that could ease the negative impact of those weapons. A priority goal for the Conference should be to formulate or strengthen rules to combat the illicit trade in and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, and to promote a sense of responsibility among States with regard to the export, import and transit of such weapons. We feel that that goal could be attained without undue effort, because the international community understands the need to

supplement national and regional efforts with international measures. Here, we support the suggestions set out in chapter V of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, contained in document A/54/258.

It is important, however, that the Conference study measures already adopted at the regional level, such as the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials; the model regulations for the control of the international movement of firearms, their parts, components and ammunition adopted by the States members of the Organization of American States (OAS) Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission; and the April 1998 declaration by the MERCOSUR States, Bolivia and Chile on the creation of a joint register mechanism of buyers and sellers of firearms, explosives, ammunition and related materials.

Another measure that the Conference should encourage is the early entry into force of the draft protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition and other related materials, supplementary to the draft United Nations convention on transnational organized crime; this would, inter alia, create a centralized international register of the production of and illicit trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials. In that context, the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile welcome the fact that the efforts made in our continent have been in the vanguard of international action to combat the proliferation of small arms, ammunition and explosives.

The MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile view with satisfaction the results achieved by programmes and other practical measures carried out by various international bodies, Governments and non-governmental organizations to encourage the surrender of weapons, to discourage their possession, and to provide options to promote the advancement of affected populations.

Finally, the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile reaffirm our call for agreement next year on international instruments and guidelines to ease the negative impact of small arms, which affects the safety and security of millions of people, women and children in particular.

Mr. Sorreta (Philippines): I wish to address directly draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.40 on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status.

We welcome this draft resolution once again and welcome in particular the developments that have taken place since last year's resolution. As a country that established itself as a nuclear-weapon-free zone as early as 1987 in its most basic legal instrument, its Constitution, the Philippines looks with much interest at Mongolia's efforts to define its own status and to establish the policy and normative framework for the international community's treatment of this nuclear-weapon-free status.

We would like to emphasize that an individual nation's attempts at establishing single-nation nuclear-weapon-free status should be viewed in that nation's own unique context and that the rules that might be established for one might not necessarily be directly applicable to another.

Having said that, we welcome in particular the security assurances issued by the five permanent members of the Security Council. We see this as a very positive development, and although it was clearly pointed out by the permanent five that this does not establish any precedents or legal commitments, we welcome it even at that level. We hope that this bodes well for my country's efforts as a nuclear-weapon-free-zone country and for our negotiations on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

We look forward to the developments that will take place between now and next year concerning the draft resolution on Mongolia, in particular with respect to the operative paragraphs that address the Asia and Pacific region and ask for our assistance in helping Mongolia to be a meaningful part of our regional security arrangements and forums.

The Chairman: Does any other delegation wish to take the floor to introduce, or to comment on, a draft resolution?

That does not appear to be the case.

We shall now proceed to the consideration of the medium-term plan on the basis of the documents that were distributed last Friday: A/55/6, programme 2; A/55/16, part I; and A/C.1/55/CRP.3.

I give the floor to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, to

make some introductory remarks on the medium-term plan.

Mr. Dhanapala (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): The disarmament programme of the Organization, programme 2, is one of the eight priority programmes identified by the Secretary-General, and its implementation has been vested with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which was re-established in 1998.

Before I proceed to introduce the proposed medium-term plan contained in document A/C.1/55/CRP.3, which is now before the Committee, I should like to provide some background information on this proposed plan.

Pursuant to the request of the General Assembly that medium-term-plan proposals be reviewed by the relevant intergovernmental bodies prior to their submission to the United Nations programme and budgetary bodies, the draft medium-term plan for disarmament was submitted last April to the Disarmament Commission for review. Thereafter, a revised proposed plan that took into account the comments of the Disarmament Commission was submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination by the Secretary-General at its fortieth session, held from 5 June to 1 July 2000, for its consideration.

The Secretary-General's proposed medium-term plan for disarmament is contained in document A/55/6, programme 2. On the basis of the outcome of its discussions, the Committee for Programme and Coordination introduced a number of modifications to the proposed medium-term plan for the disarmament programme and recommended that the General Assembly approve the proposed plan, as modified.

The modified medium-term plan is contained in document A/C.1/55/CRP.3, as I mentioned earlier, while the results of the discussion at the Committee for Programme and Coordination, including its conclusions and recommendations, are recorded in document A/55/16, part I. I understand that the three documents I have mentioned were circulated to the First Committee last Friday.

As representatives know, the medium-term plan is the principal policy directive of the United Nations. It is a translation of legislative mandates into programmes and subprogrammes, its objectives and strategies to be derived from the policy orientations and goals set by the intergovernmental organs. It serves as a framework for the formulation of the biennial programme budgets within the period covered by the plan. It should be noted also that the medium-term plan will be revised and updated every two years to reflect any new or additional mandates derived from the General Assembly and relevant intergovernmental organs.

The proposed plan for the disarmament programme was drawn up on the basis of existing mandates set by the Charter and the General Assembly in the field of arms limitation and disarmament, including its special sessions on disarmament. As such, the proposed plan does not deviate in any significant manner from the previous medium-term plan for disarmament, given that there has been no drastic change in the existing mandates.

I should like to bring to the Committee's attention, however, one main difference between the last medium-term plan and the one that is now before the Committee. The current proposed plan contains a description of the disarmament programme as a whole as well as of its subprogrammes, which correspond to the organizational units of the Department. There were no subprogrammes in the previous plan.

Let me now briefly highlight the proposed plan of the disarmament programme. The general orientation of the programme continues to focus on two major concerns in the field of disarmament, namely weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and conventional arms. As outlined in the proposed plan before the Committee, contained in document A/C.1/55/CRP.3, the overall strategy of the programme is to facilitate and to encourage, as appropriate, disarmament measures at all levels.

Within this framework, the programme will continue to assist Member States in promoting, strengthening and consolidating multilaterally negotiated principles and norms in all the fields of disarmament. It will promote transparency and confidence-building measures. It will expand its outreach activities, including through its Web site on the Internet, to ensure the exchange of impartial and factual information on disarmament and security-related matters among Member States, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations. It will assist Member States in promoting regional

approaches to disarmament and security, including through the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament.

The programme will continue to facilitate the process of multilateral deliberation and negotiation. It will monitor and assess current and future trends in the field of disarmament and international security. It will continue to provide training and advisory services to Member States, in particular developing countries. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/2, the programme will address gender concerns in its activities.

The objectives of the disarmament programme will be pursued through its five sub-programmes, namely, multilateral negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament; weapons of mass destruction; conventional arms, including practical disarmament measures; monitoring database and information; and regional disarmament.

Bearing in mind that the medium-term plan provides the future direction and approach of the disarmament programme, I need not stress how important and valuable the input of this Committee will be as the main Committee of the General Assembly dealing with disarmament and international security matters. I look forward to the constructive views and comments of the members of the Committee. I remain at the Committee's disposal for any additional information or clarifications. As pointed out by the Chairman, the views of members on the deliberations of the proposed plan will be transmitted to the Fifth Committee, which is expected to begin its consideration of the item on programme planning at the end of October.

The Chairman: The floor is now open for comments. In this connection, I should like to inform the Committee that the Under-Secretary-General has expressed his readiness to answer any questions concerning the medium-term plan.

Ms. Arce de Jeannet (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like to thank Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for his detailed introduction of the disarmament section of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

The delegation of Mexico had the honour of coordinating the informal consultations held on programme 2, entitled "Disarmament", of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 during the meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination session held last July.

I should like to express our appreciation to all the delegations that took part in those consultations. Their flexibility and readiness to compromise made it possible for us to reach agreement on a text acceptable to all the participants. The recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which are contained in paragraph 55 of Part I of document A/55/16, reflect that consensus. I should point out that that text is the same as that circulated in the First Committee in document A/C.1/55/CRP.3.

These were negotiations which, above all, highlighted the interest Member States have in consolidating the work of the Organization in the disarmament arena. In the course of the consultations, compromises necessary for reaching agreement had to be made. The final text represents a delicate balance which we believe must be preserved. Perhaps because of a mistake in the transcription of the document agreed to in informal consultations, the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination did not included the agreed version of the final paragraph dealing with the legislative mandates for programme 2, entitled "Disarmament". That, too, was a consensus paragraph, It should read as follows:

(*spoke in English*)

> "The mandate for the programme derives from the priorities established in the relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions in the field of disarmament, including the final document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, resolution S-10/2."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

That paragraph should take the place of the list of resolutions currently found in A/C.1/55/CRP.3, because that was the text agreed on in the informal consultations.

Having made that clarification, the delegation of Mexico reaffirms its backing for the recommendations submitted by the Committee for Programme and Coordination for programme 2, entitled "Disarmament", with the aim of ensuring their inclusion in the final version of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

The Chairman: The comments of the representative of Mexico will, of course, be transmitted to the Fifth Committee.

If any other delegation wishes to speak, the floor is open.

Delegations may also submit their views to me in writing. Those views will also be transmitted to the Fifth Committee. Delegations wishing to submit their views in writing should do so by 23 October at the latest, so that we have time to prepare the report to the Fifth Committee.

As no other delegation wishes to speak on this subject, I should like to express, on behalf of the Committee, our deep appreciation for the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his very comprehensive statement relating to the medium-term plan.

We have concluded our consideration of the medium-term plan. We shall prepare a verbatim record of the discussion in the Committee this morning, reflecting the views and comments expressed by delegations, and will transmit it to the Fifth Committee for due consideration.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.